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E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR SSI SPEAKER ON TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS (TIP);
THEME: DEMOCRACY, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND THE RULE OF LAW

1. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: Embassy Maseru requests a speaker to talk about trafficking in persons (TIP) under the theme of "Democracy, Civil Society, and the Rule of Law." This is in line with the Embassy's Mission Strategic Plan (MSP) goal to advance democracy and promote human rights while mitigating the threat of transnational crime. In 2009, Lesotho became a Tier Two Watchlist country for trafficking, the first year it had ever been ranked. Since the publication of the TIP report, it has become an even more urgent mission goal to work with the government, local NGO's, and other partners on the issue of human trafficking. The country is attempting to address the problem by drafting a law, increasing awareness of the issue, and looking for partners to help conduct a study which would evaluate the actual degree to which trafficking is occurring in the country, something that has never been done in Lesotho before. Lesotho is thought to be mainly a country of origin and transit for human trafficking activities and though there is no reliable evidence, isolated cases have shown that the country does experience some degree of internal and international human trafficking. Economic factors appear to be the reason for trafficking from the country, and extreme poverty combined with very high unemployment and a large orphan population make Lesotho extremely vulnerable to this threat.

2. TIME FRAME: Post requests a one week program. We hope to share the speaker with Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, and could easily program the speaker during their desired time frame from late March to either April or May 2010. We could not support the speaker during the week immediately preceding or following Easter, or during the World Cup, mid-June to mid-July.

3. PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM: This speaker program will support the MSP priorities highlighted above. We expect to ask the speaker to do a workshop with the inter-sectoral committee on trafficking, which includes several government ministries; NGOs such as the Lesotho Child Counseling Unit; members of the United Nations family; representatives of the Lesotho Mounted Police - particularly its Child and Gender Protection Unit; and border control personnel. We would also hope to work with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Gender, which are the lead Ministries on the Committee, to identify public audiences which could most benefit from the speaker's expertise in defining and explaining trafficking. We will also target youth audiences, hoping to have a public Town Hall meeting where the issues of trafficking can be discussed, including the opportunity to ask questions of the government Ministries working on the issue. Our underlying purpose is to support the government's efforts to address this issue, and to help them keep up the momentum that they have gathered on this issue within the past year.

4. AUDIENCES: The speaker will address Embassy-facilitated public events at venues such as the American Room at the National Library and the National University of Lesotho. We hope to address student groups at some of the largest local high schools to sensitize them on the issue. We also expect to convene a multiple-day workshop to facilitate and encourage the efforts of the government's inter-sectoral committee to fight

human trafficking (described above). Finally, the Public Affairs Section will also arrange radio and television interviews to broaden the impact of these presentations.

¶5. PROPOSED TOPICS AND NATURE OF EVENTS: Discussions and presentations will center on the definition of human trafficking, main actors in human trafficking, trafficked persons and traffickers, geographical dynamics (Lesotho is completely land-locked by South Africa), root causes, current legal framework, current projects and programs, legal actions and possible policy amendments. We expect to address specifics of drafting legislation with the inter-sectoral committee, and to spend time with border control agents and law enforcement to discuss ways that current laws could be use to apprehend traffickers.

¶6. LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT: No interpreters needed, all sessions will be conducted in English. Where necessary, Post Public Diplomacy staff can provide on the spot interpretations of complicated questions and answers.

¶7. PROGRAM OFFICER AND CONTACT INFORMATION:

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¶8. FUNDING: All funding would need to be provided by the IIP speaker's program. As post does not have an separate Public Diplomacy budget, Post will likely approach AF/PD to request additional funds for workshops and other Public Diplomacy activities which are not funded under the IIP speaker's program.

¶9. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS: Embassy Maseru expects to share this speaker with Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, as well as other interested posts.
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